

**Department of Commerce
Trade Policy Division**

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**Cotton Technical Assistance Programme for African
Countries (Cotton TAP)**

Background

The Cotton TAP, launched in 2012, funded by Ministry of External Affairs under 2nd India Africa Forum Summit & implemented by Department of Commerce is being implemented in six African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Malawi, Nigeria & Uganda). This initiative was in response to the request of Cotton-4 countries at the WTO for Government of India's assistance for developing the cotton sector.

The Programme

The primary objective of the programme is to build local capacities on cotton production technologies, post harvest handling, by-product utilization besides augmenting R&D capacities in biotechnological research, bio-control measures, ginning technologies and setting up of infrastructure to achieve the above. The programme also focuses on development of value added downstream activities through training and exposure to Indian cotton & textile sector in addition to a pilot facility being set up for skill development for garment industry. The project is being implemented by leading cotton research & development organizations under Indian Council of Agricultural Research & the Ministry of Agriculture (Government of India). IL&FS Clusters has been appointed as the Programme Management Agency. The project is scheduled to be completed by March 2016. The project outlay is Rs 210 million.

Project Impact

Capacity Building Components

About 200 stakeholders (scientists, extension officers, lead farmers, policy makers) were provided exposure cum training in India besides covering another 200 extension workers/ scientists/ researchers/ lead farmers during the in-country training programme in six countries. This has helped to create a pool of specialists in various areas of production, research (biotechnology), modern extension systems, post harvest handling & technology, textile sector development etc.

The programme is a pilot initiative of technical assistance to help the participating African countries and enable them to develop the cotton sector in a holistic manner covering the all segments of the value chain starting from production, post-harvest handling and further value addition to finished products. Several initiatives under the project such as exposure visits to major textile clusters in India for the policy makers and their interaction with Indian counterparts, fellowship programmes on biotechnology etc are believed to play a critical role in the development of cotton & textile sector in these countries.

The programme has already generated interest in these countries. Government of Nigeria had deputed a delegation of senior officials to have a deeper understanding of the biotechnology initiatives being pursued in India in the cotton sector to help their country in possible introduction of Bt Cotton. Similar activities are being pursued by Uganda through an MoU with Central Institute of Cotton Research.

Infrastructure Component

The programme also envisages creation of the following infrastructure on pilot scale for the required capacity building initiatives along the cotton value chain

- (1) Regional Knowledge Cluster in Benin – The centre is expected to provide hands-on training to the post harvest handling of cotton.
- (2) Bio-pesticide laboratory in Uganda aimed at screening and assessing local potential bio pesticide materials and for certification and standardization of bio-pesticides.
- (3) Two Skill Schools (one each in Nigeria & Malawi) aimed at imparting skills on garment manufacturing for local youth with focus on women.
- (4) Promotion ‘Agri-implements’ in all participating countries for training & demonstration of mechanization targeting small holder farmers.
- (5) ICT based disease and pest surveillance system in Malawi aimed at transferring technology on pest surveillance to minimize incidence of pest through timely intervention based on real time feedback to farmers through SMS linked advisory. Already 500 farmers have registered under the activity and more under process of being registered.

The infrastructure created with the advanced double roller gin (ginning process in Africa particularly West Africa, where C-4 countries are located, adopt saw ginning which produces inferior quality cotton) has capacity to process 576 tonnes of lint cotton per season with a provision to expand it to another 576 tonnes of lint cotton per season. The centre can provide in-depth training to about 1000 people annually on ginning & other post harvest handling methods. The two ‘Skill Schools’ can train

annually 400-500 people ready to be employed in the garment factories. The ICT based intervention has provision to cater to 5000 farmers. The agri implements being made available will facilitate farm mechanization with latest technology reducing drudgery and enhancing labour productivity in small holding sector.

There has been continuous demand from all the participating countries to continue the programme besides getting demand from new countries for such programmes to be implemented in their respective countries.
